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PP RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEH KI #1179 2061252
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 251252Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4438
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001179

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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL NYAMWISI THROWS VOTES TO
KABILA

1. (SBU) Presidential candidate Mbusa Nyamwisi confirmed in an interview July 23 with Radio France Internationale (RFI) that he was urging his supporters to vote for incumbent President Joseph Kabila. The interview confirmed growing speculation that the one-time RCD-K/ML rebel leader's lackluster campaigning, even in his home province of North Kivu, signaled that he'd struck a deal with Kabila. Internal MONUC documents from July 21 reported that RCD-K/ML Secretary General and National Assembly Deputy Jean Ernest Kyaviro had complained of mounting disarray in the party ranks as RCD-K/ML party members walked out of a recent meeting with Nyamwisi in Beni, North Kivu when the presidential candidate would not deny an alliance with current president Kabila.

2. (SBU) Nyamwisi was optimistic about his chances in the elections as recently as late June, when he met with poloff to discuss his campaign. At that time, he had cemented an alliance with Olivier Kamitatu, formerly the Speaker of the National Assembly under the banner Forces for Renewal. Nyamwisi also told poloff he was close to convincing Vice President Azarias Ruberwa of the RCD party to join the alliance. Unfortunately for Nyamwisi, the actual and potential alliances he counted on disappeared. Kamitatu joined the Presidential Majority Alliance (AMP), and Azarias Ruberwa's RCD-G remains unaligned. Nyamwisi undoubtedly realized his best hope lay with Kabila, although the latter has not, to MONUC or Embassy's knowledge, promised Nyamwisi any position for doing so.

3. (SBU) Officially, Nyamwisi told the RFI reporter that he was rallying behind Kabila in the hope that he, Kabila, could win the presidential election in the first round. He argued that a first-round win would help stabilize the country and reduce the prevailing tense political atmosphere. He said that the legislative candidates of his umbrella party, Forces for Renewal, had his full support and would continue to campaign under that banner.

4. (SBU) Comment: Rumors are that other candidates have more quietly done the same as Nyamwisi, i.e. thrown their support to stronger rivals. While Nyamwisi never had a serious chance of becoming president (even insiders like Kyaviro called Nyamwisi a "small fish"), his name recognition in northern North Kivu could have garnered him a percentage of the vote. While Nyamwisi's supporters are not numerous, their votes for Kabila will boost the president's chances of a strong performance in North Kivu, if they follow their leader's advice. End comment.

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